

RAC Meeting Minutes May 17th, 2005

ATTENDANCE

RAC: Kelly Adams, Jake Bollinger, Yevette Tuell, Mike Tylka, Tom Faulkner, Mel Quale, Ken Sanders, Bud Bedke, and Marc Brackett.

BLM: Howard, Scott Uhrig, Rick VanderVoet, Zach Oper, Chris Simonson, Andy Payne, Wendy Reynolds, Jim Tharp, Nancy Ady, Melissa Schneir, Peggy Bartels, Elena Shaw, Barry Rose, John Kurtz, Brandon Brown, Scott Barker, Jeff Steele, Sky Buffat and Beckie Wagoner.

Other: Randy Smith & Dave Parish from Fish & Game, Sarah Bigger from ESPRI.

8:30 Meeting was called to order by Kelly Adams, RAC president.

Welcomes followed by Kelly Adams and Howard Hedrick, BLM TF District Manager.

Due to lack of members the last meeting minutes were address but not approved.

Kelly presented a letter addressed to the BLM State Office; it requested that a “noxious weed management program” be put in place. The members present agreed with the letter.

PFC training classes: (no cost)

Burley- June 15-16

Pocatello – June 19-20

*contact Erv Cowley (208) 373-3810

Berger seeding Project

Howard then gave some history on the Burger seeding Project followed by a presentation by: Nancy Ady (Rangeland Management Specialist), and Peggy Bartels (Wildlife Biologist).

-52,000 acres of federal, state, stock driveway and private land.

-described as a solid stand of big sagebrush with no understory grasses or water.

-1000 AUM's

Objective:

-Restore reductions in Class I privileges suffered in other areas.

-Provide a barrier against the Beet Leaf Hopper to protect bean and beet crops

-Transfer grazing use from the South Hills mule deer range to reduce grazing on critical deer winter range.

-Reduce fire hazard

-Provide additional forage to relieve depleted ranges in other areas.

-Strengthen livestock economic base if area.

Sage Grouse Draft Conservation Plan:

-due to the public in Aug of 2005

-19 threats will be addressed

9:30 Fish & Game (Randy Smith & Dave Parish) then joined the meeting and shared their involvement and awareness.

Sagebrush burs and their management programs were then discussed.

Howard covered the challenge BLM has to have a sage management plan that will keep everyone happy and not cause litigation, as well as keep the environment and wildlife safe. Howard called for any suggestions the RAC might have on this topic. It was suggested we wait for natural remedies such as fire, and then provide rehabilitation to that area.

Elena talked about her Local Sage Grouse Working Group and where they are as far as management.

Randy added that a sage grouse tract can be changed if needed.

Kelly asked for interested RAC to volunteer for a sub-group, no one responded.

Idaho Wildlife Conservation Strategy

Sarah Bigger, Associate Director for Environmental Science and Public Policy Research (ESPRI) at BSU gave an update on the strategy plan.

- the blueprint needs to be to the conservation specialist listing the greatest conservation needs.

- Federal, State, and Local agencies/government and private entities have all contributed research for the strategy plan.

- helps identify species before they are listed

- a plan has to be in place to be eligible for State Wildlife funding.

- ~funds are used to gather data

- ~improve habitat

- ~participate in conservation efforts

- ~implement conservation actions

Development of the Idaho Strategies Leadership Communication comes from:

- Fish and Game

- Expertise data from State, Federal, Tribal, education and private entities.

There are 8 elements required:

- species distribution and abundance

- local and condition of habitat

- potential problems

- strategies

- monitoring

- revision and review of strategies

- interagency coordination

- public participation

Example of Species within the strategy plan:

- pygmy rabbits
- mountain quail
- mountain goat
- kootena river white sturgeon
- spotted bats
- great basin collared lizard

The public participates by joining focus groups, surveys, workshops, public review of the strategy, partners, and by implementing strategies.

Strategy Plan Schedule:

10/04 – species identified

Now – compile information and writing plan

7/05 – draft due

8/05 – final draft is due to the Fish & Game

9/05 – Submit final draft

*Wildlife watching at 74% is the more common then both hunting (23%) and fishing (48%).

Statewide OHV Campaign

Barry Rose, external affairs, from BLM state office joined us and showed us the campaign they are working on to help with some of the OHV issues we are facing now.

Issues that include:

- impacts on soil, weeds, wildlife, T& E species
- user conflicts

Safety Concerns:

- thousands of new riders
- injury reports in Idaho

A 2004 Idaho Forrest Management survey found that:

- 82% think ATV's should be limited to designated trails
- 8% think ATV use should be restricted
- 8% think ATV's should not be allowed

Collaborative Response:

- OHV Outreach Project responds to these trends

-Sponsoring Agencies:

- ~BLM
- ~FS
- ~IDL
- ~IDFG
- ~IDPR

Key Message of Campaign:

- promote responsible use of OHV's

- Don't travel cross-country
- Use establishes/designated routes
- Follow safe riding practices
- Targeted Audience:
 - Men 18-54
 - Hunters
 - Hobbyists

Communication Strategies:

- empower verses command
- use mass media to raise awareness
- provide more details through website and support products
 - ~outdoor billboards
 - ~radio advertisements
 - ~support products

Media costs:

- outdoor \$40,000
- radio \$25,000
- support \$5,000

2005 Funding:

- IDPR grant \$30,000
- BLM \$30,000
- agency partnership \$10,000

Next Steps:

- Feb-April
 - Creative
 - Media
 - Testing
- May-Aug
 - Finalize messaging
 - Produce radio and outdoor
 - Produce, distribute, & collateral
- Mid-Sept
 - Media campaign begins

Travel Plan Cooperation Summery

John Kurtz from the Shoshone Field Office went over the plan:

Some current conditions & issues:

- open area
- legal access
- User-created trails

Multi-jurisdiction Transport Plan:

- future of BLM recreation/transportation we can't be all for everyone
- need to understand the demands and needs of visitors/residents

Coordinated efforts:

- education component
- BLM state office
- Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission
- Big Wood back country trails

*Currently analyzing a single-track trail West of Hailey, it will include 2 loops on BLM and County roads covering 12 miles.

1:30 – 1:45 was scheduled for public comment time; none showed.

Craters of the Moon Update

Rick gave an overview of the Craters Plan.

- plan is awaiting printing approval
- 30 day protest once approved
- 60 day governor review
- 2 weeks for print

*website is working on the Forrest Service side but not BLM side.

<http://www.nps.gov/crmo/>

Great Rift Science Symposium is Oct 6th - 9th, 2005

Topics include:

- Volcanology & Geology
- Ecosystems & Habitat
- Flora & Fauna
- The Outdoor Classroom
- History & Culture

Glenns Ferry OHV Considerations:

Jeff Steele, Jarbidge Field Manager, brought us up to date on Glenns Ferry OHV issues:

2004 Ranchers were increasingly concerned about OHV usage amounts in this particular area because:

- ~ the area doesn't hold snow which makes it desirable for OHV's in the winter
- ~too close to residential property
- ~safety; crossing the Pasadena Valley Road

In the winter of 2004 a voluntary courtesy zone was implemented around the private lands in the areas of increased noise. At this point compliance is voluntary, calls have dropped some in number, but it is still a concern for local residents.

Due to massive amounts of OHV use it has impacted the Oregon Trail segments and other resources. There are numerous new trails appearing, from cross-country travel, and hill climbing.

A Short term solution would be to close lands South of Pasadena Valley Road to OHV's. It would be a minimal amount of land, just enough to protect the trail sections.

For long term we need to inventory and get a GIS analysis of existing roads, trails, and routes the OHV's use. Then prepare a Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP) for the Oregon Trail area.

Mel also suggested a designated parking area and trail maintenance/upkeep.

Fire/Fuels Presentation

Brandon Brown, Fire Use Specialist, from the Shoshone FO gave a presentation.

Cotterell Mountain Wind Energy Project Draft ESI Status

Wendy Reynolds, Burley Field Office Manager and Scott Barker from the Burley FO gave an update on the Wind Energy Plan.

3 alternatives for the plan, there are several concerns with these plans.

- grazing
- noise
- wildlife
- visual
- Native American

Draft EIS status:

- Washington DC has been briefed
- permission was granted to print

Alternative B – 130 originally proposed turbines

Alternative C – 81-98 turbines

Alternative D – 66-82 turbines

Cooperating agencies:

- Fish & Wildlife Service
- Bonneville Power
- Bureau of Reclamation

- Cassia County Commission
- Idaho Department of Lands

*Idaho Fish & Game is a participating agency

The Cottrell Tour had to be rescheduled due to rain; new date is Tuesday, June 23rd
9:00 leaving from Burley Field office.

Next Meeting is Tuesday, Aug 9th at Burley Field Office.

Future Agenda items:

- Blaine Co. airport
- Burger
- Blaine Co. travel plan
- Windlin

Subgroup:

- Marc
- Mike
- Kelly

Thanks were given by Kelly and Howard for attendance and time, and then the meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.